



Seabury Resources for Aging

**Congregational Resources: Lunch & Learn Meeting
St. Luke's Episcopal Church
September 14, 2011, Noon – 2pm**

Meeting Notes: "Mentoring/Raising New Leadership"

Attendance:

*Raymond Blanks, Trinity, DC	Shirley Rhones, St. Luke's DC
*Gerry Donnolly, Christ, Capitol Hill	Annie Shaw, Seabury staff
Otis Ducker, St. Timothy's DC	Paula Singleton, St. Luke's DC
Sandra M. Epps, Ph.D., St. Luke's, DC	Helen Spence, Grace Silver Spring
Linda Ewald, St. Mark's, Capitol Hill	The Rev. Robyn Franklin-Vaughn, Howard Univ.
Eleanor Hill, Calvary, DC	Wilhelmina Walden, Atonement
Wydett Isley, Grace, Silver Spring	Thomasina Washington, St. Philip the Evangelist
Lois Jackson, Holy Comforter	Theresa Wheeler, Grace, Silver Spring
Frances Jones, St. George's, DC	*Dianne Williams, St. Luke's, DC
*Karen Kucik, St. Nicholas, Darnstown	Mary Ann Wilmer, St. George's DC
Viola Lorker, St. Luke's DC	Louise A. Young, St. George's DC
Mary Miers, St. James', Potomac	
Barbara Ramos, St. Luke's DC	

*** The asterisk notes newly appointed parish contacts. Please give them a "special welcome".**

Before leading our noon prayers on this day, the Day of the Holy Cross, the Rev. Franklin-Vaughn set the tone for today: this is our time, our space to reflect, to be still and know that the cross, once a symbol of punishment is our transformation.

After our corporate worship in the church, Paula Singleton welcomed this meeting of parish contacts for older adult ministries to St. Luke's and also as a board member of Seabury Resources for Aging. Our lunch was blessed by Rev. Vaughn. During lunch, Mary Ann Wilmer, as the Board Liaison for Older Adult Ministries (and as a member of St. George's), opened the meeting by asking all to introduce themselves and their home parish.

Annie Shaw welcomed The Rev. Robyn Franklin-Vaughn (Robyn) by saying: The frequent cry I hear is who will lead this group and how can we recruit younger members. . While we might not leave with answers, we will have insights and suggestions to take back to our home congregations and older adult ministry groups.

I minister to/with students at Howard University. And, did you know that most Episcopalians come to our church as young adults? There are fewer "cradle Episcopalians" and it's not

unusual that I'm often the only Episcopalian in a group. In the university setting, people coming in aren't sure about this Christian bit but wouldn't miss Bible study. They come to ask questions. Questions they often were not permitted to ask at home or in their home church. Yet the university is a time to question. Some enter by saying "I'm saved, are you?" And my question in response is "what does that mean"? I don't answer and I allow them to explore, reflect for themselves. Then they leave the University where they've had great freedom to examine beliefs, their lives for themselves and end up in a congregation. If it's a traditional congregation, do they feel welcomed for who they are and what they bring as their gifts?

[Remember this is a generation who has never lived without a microwave or color tv. Often they can't write well; they are accustomed to using a computer. They are used to a paperless society. Even the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer are on their iPods or telephones!]

So we feel we should invite people (preferably like us) into our church, the church we've bled sweat and tears to keep afloat. We forget that the church belongs to everyone – even if they dress funny. What is our task here? I was gifted by this conversation from a priest who told me outright that "My job is to make sure nothing changes." Then he added, "Your job is to not let that happen". He gave me permission to challenge the authority of the church.

Let your congregation be where people can simply appear... without looking at them as future pledges.

Receiving new people may mean we feel uncomfortable.

Being a Christian community with integrity means to be in relationship with.

Creative Mentoring: If I'm honest with myself, I admit I hate to be told what to do, how to think and act. What works for me is to share information (give me understanding of why we do things the way we do) and then let me do the task by myself (successfully or failing at it) then coming back for feedback. That isn't often how we want to mentor: we might want a shadow to learn by practicing what I do. I'm not sure that works with younger people.

Comment/discussion: Our seniors have held all the jobs in the church and we struggle with handing over programs and jobs to others. We're the generation who learned by "Do because I say so" so this new way of learning is especially challenging.

Comment/discussion: I'm new to my current church and back home, we were much more informal and led by the spirit in worship. When you talk about openness, how do we accept others form of worship, or applauding, or raising our hands or saying amen? That openness often is clergy-directed. How can we affect the culture of the congregation toward acceptance? (gradually, led by children...)

Comment/discussion: I'm not in touch with many young people and have been in a traditional church. Does FB erode the community worship? Key: Faithfulness of the church and relationships.

Comment/discussion: Being free to do something ourselves will free others who may have been reluctant to rock the boat. Are we still the "frozen chosen"? There is a lot of expression/feedback even in traditional settings from facial expressions, nodding my head. I can tell when I am missing a key point from (even silent) reactions.

Comment/discussion: Intergenerational bridges: How do students reach out to seniors? I'd like to know how to link young people to elders. Talk about how Howard students reach out. There is uncertainty on both sides of the generational gap. Young people often think they know more than they do and they do not want to be treated as children (do this my way because I say so). Example from St. George's as Howard students do attend there. A young woman in medical school asked the Vestry for permission to appeal for assistance to travel to Haiti. The congregation supported her, she returned, reported shared and became involved with us. She's now in her residency elsewhere.

Comment/discussion: Our task is equally to reach out within our own age group. Hospitality, as a function of the church, deepens our relationships, engages people with one another. We have a role in making certain that our age group is taken care of (emotionally, socially, rides). Living in a senior development, we aim to include everyone and that includes my mentally challenged sister. The younger adults can then see for themselves how they might care for one another. The key is to foster closer relationships, engagement among ourselves in our communities (church, neighborhood). It is an issue that so many of us live alone and can feel so isolated. What is our role as a church?

One example of mentoring: I invited 3 young black men to attend a fundraiser for transitional housing to get a feel that something greater happens in the Episcopal church. Now these young men are working with our Feeding program and recruiting volunteers.

Comment/discussion: We've talked about the college aged young adults, but have neglected to name the challenges of age/class/social structure. We might talk as well about these other younger adults and reaching out.

Episcopalians have to learn to listen to one another. Then we can know our next steps.

For future discussion: Multi-cultural congregations. Practicing Hospitality.

One hour was too short for this important discussion. While we have no "one answer fits all" and certainly no "short answer", we shared some salient points for reflection.

Thank you, Robyn, for this lively discussion.

Our challenge now is to take this initial conversation back to our individual congregations for continued discussion. During the year we will return to this, and similar concerns.

Annie Shaw, Note Taker

This meeting, hosted by Seabury Congregational Resources, is one of a series of meetings for parish representatives for older adult ministries and is open to all. You are asked to share this information with your home congregation. You might post these notes on a senior ministry bulletin board, write an article for the church newsletter, give the notes to the clergy. Please share your action steps with Annie Shaw 202-414-6314 ashaw@seaburyresources.org. If you wish assistance, Seabury staff will work with you in crafting articles for your congregation.

Announcements

Thank you to St. Luke's for graciously hosting this month's meeting and for providing parking space for car-pooling for October's meeting at Atonement.

Check out our website: www.seaburyresources.org. Meeting Notes, current Parish Contacts are listed under the Congregational Resources tab.

Prayer Requests For:

- Muhl Alexander for healing & thanksgiving for a recent birthday
- Edna Jones and her family (niece's death 9-13)
- Diane Robinson for healing
- Dr. Estelle Taylor for healing
- Cathedral & Church House staff (aftermath of Earthquake damage)

Your Help Requested – Seabury Ward 5 Services for Older Adults

Please assist the older adults living in Ward 5 by donating food to the Seabury Food Pantry. Needed items include: Safeway, Giant, or Shoppers gift cards

- assorted soups
- tuna fish
- jelly, jam, etc.
- spaghetti
- spaghetti sauce
- pudding
- instant potatoes
- instant coffee
- applesauce
- crackers
- cereal
- sardines
- ravioli

UPCOMING SEABURY CONGREGATIONAL LunchNLearn Meetings

- Wednesday, October 12, 2011 Church of the Atonement Noon to 2pm
Program: What is Senior Ministry at your church. Come & share.
- Wednesday, November 9, 2011 All Souls Memorial, noon to 2pm. Catered lunch \$10/person – or what you can afford
- Wednesday, December 14, 2011 Lunch and Learn Christmas Pot Luck Luncheon @ St. George's DC

UPCOMING EVENTS AT SEABURY:

September 18, 2011 Celebrate with Seabury @ Friendship Terrace and enjoy our Open House showing off the new renovations!

September 26-30, 2011 The main Seabury offices are moving from 2nd Street NE location to Friendship Terrace. Telephone numbers, emails, will remain unchanged but have patience with us that week as response time may be slower .

October 15, 2011 -- Event/Special Announcement at Christian Community Group Homes
Help the Homeless Walk

December 14, 2011 OPEN HOUSE at Seabury Ward 5 Offices. Car-pool from the Christmas Luncheon over to Ward 5.